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MARYLAND MODEL FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Fact Sheet
39

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What is the Maryland Model for School Readiness?

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) is a framework that helps teachers instruct and assess young children in the skills they need to be ready for school. In order to implement the MMSR effectively, teachers of young children receive intensive professional development that currently includes the following elements:

- ♦ Maryland's definition of "school readiness"
- ♦ Vision and belief statement
- ♦ Learning standards, indicators, and objectives for kindergarten and prekindergarten
- ♦ Systematic assessment method which supports classroom instruction using a hybrid of the Work Sampling System™* (WSS)
- ♦ MMSR Fall/Entry and Spring/Exit Exemplars which provide criteria or guidelines for evaluating student performance
- ♦ Focus on assessment, instruction, family communication, and collaboration and coordination among early childhood programs.

How does the MMSR define children's readiness for school?

MMSR defines school readiness as the state of early development that enables a child to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences. As a result of family nurturing and interactions with others, a young child in this stage has reached certain levels of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language development, cognition and general knowledge. School readiness acknowledges individual approaches toward learning as well as unique experiences and backgrounds of each child.

How does the Work Sampling System (WSS) relate to the MMSR?

The MMSR includes a hybrid of the WSS™ that is nationally and internationally considered a state-of-the-art assessment system for early learning. The WSS™, used with the Fall/Entry and Spring/Exit Exemplars, helps teachers document and assess children's skills, knowledge, behaviors, and academic accomplishment across a variety of developmental and curricular areas. Through observation, recording, and evaluating everyday classroom experiences and activities, teachers gain a better understanding of students' skills, behaviors, and abilities. Thus, the WSS™ is not a conventional readiness test. It is designed to support the learning of each student toward consistent expectations across seven developmental and curricular domains:

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| ♦ Social and Personal Development | ♦ Language and Literacy |
| ♦ Mathematical Thinking | ♦ Scientific Thinking |
| ♦ Social Studies | ♦ The Arts |
| ♦ Physical Development | |

Some local school systems and early childhood providers are using compatible assessment systems that reflect the curricular domains of the WSS™.

(*™ Trademark for Pearson Assessments)

<i>How does the MMSR work in the classroom?</i>	<p>Teachers and providers implement MMSR by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Planning instruction that aligns curriculum, assessment and instruction ♦ Observing and documenting students' performance ♦ Modifying instruction to meet each student's strengths and needs as a result of ongoing documentation of students' performance in the classroom ♦ Communicating readiness expectations and students' learning profiles with families so that they can support their children's learning at home ♦ Articulating students' progress with receiving teachers and instructional specialists. Early care providers articulate children's progress with public schools.
<i>What are the benefits for teachers and students?</i>	<p>Teachers gain an in-depth understanding of children's learning, allowing them to probe more deeply into the learning potential of each child in their classroom. Children benefit from teachers who are intent on understanding their individual strengths and needs, and they gain from the communication between their teachers and their families working together.</p>
<i>Who is participating?</i>	<p>Teachers from all 24 local school systems have received professional development in MMSR, as well as teachers from Maryland School for the Deaf and Maryland School for the Blind. Many school systems also include prekindergarten teachers in the professional development. Early childhood special educators have also participated in the MMSR professional development. MMSR professional development is also being implemented in Head Start and child care programs across the state.</p>
<i>How does MMSR professional development support early educators?</i>	<p>Early educators are supported in their implementation of the MMSR Kindergarten Assessment through long-term, on-going, intensive professional development based on knowledge of child development and an understanding of each child's individual strengths, interests and areas of concern. Seven sequentially designed modules and content specific modules emphasize early childhood instruction, assessment, curriculum, communicating with families and collaboration with other early childhood programs.</p>
<i>How does the use of WSS™ relate to readiness information?</i>	<p>Kindergarten teachers use WSS™ to generate information on student readiness in the fall of the kindergarten year. The reported information includes the teachers' assessment of students on selected performance indicators across the seven WSS™ domains. Information is reported for three categories reflecting the full range of skills young children bring to kindergarten. Children who are "fully ready" demonstrate the skills and behaviors needed to meet typical kindergarten expectations. Students "approaching" readiness inconsistently demonstrate these skills and require targeted support. Students who are rated "developing" need considerable instructional support.</p>
<i>How can the school readiness information be used?</i>	<p>Readiness information on entering kindergarten is primarily used to assist teachers, providers, and policymakers to develop community needs assessment regarding the skill levels of children entering kindergarten; target federal, state, and local funds for early childhood programs and support services; develop forums for building partnerships; and enhance curricular and intervention for young children.</p>